



#### GRAND OPERA POSSIBILITIES.

Grand opera in this country sadly needs a new bright particular star, a "top liner" as they say in the continuous, the magic of whose name will fill a big auditorium. The American public has been surfeited with the familiar superlative artists, so that now it rises only languidly to the bait of even a De Reszke. A realization of this led to the rumor circulated last winter, that New York would be without opera this season. Maurice Grau finally denied the report with a positive announcement, but, almost in the same breath, he intimated that he was tired of trying to please so fickle a taste. Mr. Grau did not manage the Covent Garden season in London last summer, and it is said that the coming season at the Metropolitan will be the

last under the direction of the only manager who has succeeded in presenting grand opera there without bankrupting himself. But it is more likely that Mr. Grau will positively retire in the spring of 1902, only to bob up again in the autumn of 1903, with the top liner aforesaid, a find so remarkable as to magnetize the greatest of modern impresarios into activity again in spite of himself.

For is it not writ down in operatic annals that the banner year for the Metro-



ELFIE PAY, WHO APPEARED IN THE LONDON PRODUCTION OF "THE WHIRL OF THE TOWN."

*From her latest photograph by Hana, London.*



KATE HASSETT, THE NEW ACTRESS CHOSEN AS LEADING WOMAN FOR "THE LAST APPEAL."

*From a photograph by Windeatt, Chicago.*



VIOLET LLOYD, WHO IS "SUSAN" IN "THE TOREADOR" AT THE LONDON GAIETY.

*From her latest photograph by Dupont, New York.*



GRANT STEWART, OF DANIEL FROHMAN'S STOCK COMPANY, ALSO PLAYWRIGHT.

*From a photograph by Rose, Providence.*



LANSING ROWAN, WHO APPEARS IN A "SHERLOCK HOLMES" COMPANY.

*From a photograph by Moore, New Orleans.*

politan was the winter of 1898-99, after a season's interregnum in classic song-birds? Oversupply may be as disastrous in the artistic as in the commercial world. But everything depends on the top liner. Possibly this may be found in the Delmonico waiter whose discovery is just now being bruited abroad in the daily press. For music is no respecter of occupations. Campanini was a blacksmith. Guillaume Duchesne is the name of the new tenor rated as a wonder by Minkowsky, the composer and friend of

Nordica and the De Reszkes. At any rate, he has seen fit to award to this young man of twenty five the two thousand dollar scholarship offered by Edouard de Reszke for the benefit of any singer possessed of an extraordinary voice, but without the means to have it properly cultivated. Nordica has offered a similar prize for young women.

Nordica, by the way, abandons opera for the present, and will tour America in recitals only. Of course it is more fatiguing in one way to furnish the entire



ANDREW MACK AS "TOM MOORE" IN HIS NEW PLAY OF THAT NAME.

*From his latest photograph by McIntosh, New York.*



EBEN PLYMPTON, AS THE KING IN "IN THE PALACE OF THE KING."

*From a photograph by Rose & Sands, New York.*

evening's entertainment oneself, but it puts no greater strain on the voice than going through with the leading part in a whole grand opera, and, when one comes to take into account the drain on the

and was born in Farmington, Maine. Her father was a farmer, and there were six children, all daughters. Music entered largely into the family life, whether in the Old Folks' Concerts held in the



nerves by the acting of a strong emotional rôle, to say nothing of the annoyance of changing costumes and the tedium of waiting for cues, a recital is child's play in comparison. Nordica received her stage name from San Giovanni, with whom she studied in Milan. She was known then as Lillian Norton, her maiden name. Giovanni called her "Giglia Nordica"—Lily of the North. She comes of sturdy old Puritan stock,

church, or in the singing bees around the hearthstone. The removal to Boston when Lillian was six afforded the means for a broader education. She entered the New England Conservatory of Music at fourteen.

It was through Mme. Titjens that she met the Maretzeks, went to New York and, after studying there for two years longer, secured an engagement with Gilmore's band. She sang with this organ-

ization both in America and England, and the money thus earned enabled her to continue her studies in Italy. When she made her operatic début in that country, her success was so decided that the Ital-

and were married. Nordica retired from the stage for a while. Fate had a singular card still to play in the game, a card that was neither death, divorce, nor voluntary separation. Mr. Gower, who had



WILLIAM COLLIER AS "ROBERT RIDGWAY" IN "ON THE QUIET."

*From a photograph by Baker, Columbus.*

ian engagement was followed by a call to St. Petersburg, and later to the Grand Opéra in Paris. While singing there she met a young American, Henry Gower, from Providence. The two fell in love



MARY MANNERING, APPEARING IN "JANICE MEREDITH."

*From her latest photograph by Morrison, Chicago.*

been a journalist, took a deep interest in electrical matters, and a boom in the new power being then on, he made considerable money in its exploitation. He then took up aëronautics as a fad, and not long



LILLIAN NORDICA, GRAND OPERA PRIMA DONNA, APPEARING THIS SEASON IN SONG RECITALS.

*From her latest photograph—Copyright by Dupont, New York.*

after his marriage embarked on a balloon voyage across the English channel. He was never seen again. Nordica returned to the stage, and, after singing at Covent Garden, crossed to her own land again and made a great success at the Metropolitan, where she has ever since remained a sterling favorite. She was at the same time one of the most useful singers on Mr. Grau's list. Her repertoire is immense, and she can be ready to appear in almost any part at brief notice. Again, she has had the privilege of studying some of the big

rôles with the composers of the operas themselves, as *Marguerite* in "Faust" with Gounod, *Ophélie* in "Hamlet" with Ambroise Thomas, and the Wagnerian parts with Frau Cosima Wagner at Bayreuth. She sang there in the famous festivals for the first time in 1894.

Some idea of Nordica's voice range may be gained when it is remembered that she can win applause in such widely dissimilar parts as *Filina* in "Mignon," as *Aïda*, and again as *Valentine* in "Les Huguenots" and *Selika* in "L'Africaine." Besides these, there are her Wagnerian

rôles, *Elsa* in "Lohengrin" and *Isolde* in "Tristan and Isolde" being two of the most popular. Nordica married again in

who had been singing at the Paris Grand Opéra, Zoltain F. Doene, and he is somewhat younger than his wife. It is



AMELIA BINGHAM, WHO HAS MADE A HIT WITH A STOCK COMPANY OF HER OWN IN "THE CLIMBERS."

*From her latest photograph by Sarony, New York.*

1896, at the close of the music festival in Indianapolis, where she had been one of the star singers. The bridegroom this time was a handsome young Polish tenor,

usually difficult to fix where these great singers live, but Nordica likes to regard London as her home. She has a beautiful house there, which she finds but little





MAY IRWIN, WHO HAS NOT YET  
RETIRED TO ENJOY THE FOR-  
TUNE SHE HAS EARNED.

*From her latest photograph—Copy-  
right by Dupont, New York.*



ETTA BUTLER, ONE OF THE TWO  
LEADERS IN "THE LIBERTY  
BELLES."

*From a photograph by Taber, San  
Francisco.*



ESTHER TITTELL, LEADING WO-  
MAN IN THE FARCE "ARE YOU  
A MASON?"

*From a photograph by Morrison,  
Chicago.*



JANE HOLLY, APPEARING WITH ELSIE DE WOLFE'S STOCK COMPANY  
IN THE NEW PLAY BY CLYDE FITCH, "THE WAY OF  
THE WORLD."

*From her latest photograph by Marceau, Los Angeles.*



MARY BLYTH, APPEARING IN  
THE CLYDE FITCH PLAY,  
"BARBARA FRIETCHIE."

*From a photograph by Baker,  
Columbus.*



ADELE RAFTER, REPLACING JES-  
SIE BARTLETT DAVIS WITH  
THE BOSTONIANS.

*From her latest photograph by  
Naegeli, New York.*



FRITZI SCHEFF, SOPRANO IN THE GRAU GRAND OPERA COMPANY.

*From a photograph—Copyright by Dupont, New York.*



EDNA WALLACE HOPPER AS SHE APPEARS IN "FLORODORA."

*From her latest photograph by Marceau, New York.*

time to enjoy. Such is the penalty these great artists pay for fame.

#### WHEN CHILD ACTORS FLOURISHED APACE.

It was just ten years after the "Pinafore" craze struck us that the "Little Lord Fauntleroy" boom broke over the land with almost equal virulence. Impersonators of the precocious *Cedric* sprang up in every direction; the original company had two, although, unlike the hydra headed *Topsies* of certain "Uncle Tom" organizations, they did not occupy the stage simultaneously. These two were Elsie Leslie, who created the part, and Tommy Russell, brother of Annie Russell, who played at the Wednesday

matinée and Saturday night performances at the Broadway during the first winter's run of the play.

Young Russell, by the way, was made the central figure in a scheme engineered by a certain young man named Wood, who manifested a deep interest in the boy actor, and who announced that he intended to build a theater for him. The site was actually chosen at Seventh Avenue and One Hundred and Twenty Fourth Street, and the foundation stone laid by Tommy himself, who journeyed all the way from Chicago for the purpose. Speeches were made on the occasion by A. M. Palmer and other eminent dramatic lights, and an elaborate banquet formed part of the pro-



ceedings. The house was to be called the West End Theater, and there was actually a periodical issued in its interest called the *West End Gazette*, edited by Hillary Bell, now the dramatic critic of the *New York Press*. Only attractions of the first order were to play in the new house, and Harlem had begun to plume itself on its fine theater when one morning it awoke to the fact that Mr. Wood was financially as intangible as smoke. It seems that he had "bluffed" the whole business, was absolutely irresponsible, and had departed to regions unknown, leaving Tommy only a big dog, and his adult dupes nothing but idle promises to pay for property, foundation stone, silver trowel, press work, and banquet. It may have been this experience which disgusted young Russell with the theatrical calling. He ceased to become a boy actor in due course, and on the completion of his schooling went into the insurance business.

Elsie Leslie, on the other hand, passed from "Fauntleroy" into another boy's rôle, a duplicate one at that. This was in Mark Twain's "The Prince and the Pauper," and if the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children did not interfere, it was because this organization is nothing if not inconsistent. A child who takes a few steps in a dance is hustled off the boards at double quick, but here was a girl barely ten years old enacting two parts in a play occupying the whole evening. Quick changes of costume were not the only arduous accessories of the impersonation; as the pauper she was trussed up like a turkey bound for a Thanksgiving oven, with the added annoyance of a gag in her mouth. But Elsie survived the ordeal for the season's run of the piece, and was then sent to boarding school.

Naturally, to a child accustomed to the excitement of life behind the scenes, the confinement of school was even more distasteful than to the ordinary young person. By way of consolation, her friend, Joseph Jefferson, as he bade her good by, added: "Well, Elsie, I can tell you one thing: until you are ready to return to the stage and be my *Juliet*, I shall never play *Romeo*." It was to appear with Mr. Jefferson that she finally left her studies, making her adult début as *Lydia* in "The Rivals," some three years ago. She continued as leading woman with the Jefferson company until last spring. She is now *Glory Quayle* in "The Christian" opposite the *John Storm* of E. J. Morgan. It is something of a coincidence

that she should follow Viola Allen in this part, as Miss Allen was the original *Mrs. Errol*, *Cedric's* mother, in the first production of "Little Lord Fauntleroy" at the Boston Museum.

An effort was made to bring Elsie away from her school in the spring of '97, to appear as the innocent young girl in the special presentation of "L'Arlésienne," a pastoral piece from the French of Alphonse Daudet, produced amid much flourish of society trumpets, and with music by Georges Bizet, composer of "Carmen." Fortunately, the principal of the school put her foot down upon the proposition to take the girl away from her studies for any such purpose—fortunately in a double sense, for "The Woman of Arles" fell flat. Even Agnes Booth, who emerged from her retirement to take the leading rôle, could not save it.

Announcement has recently been made of the marriage of Miss Leslie to William Jefferson Winter, a son of William Winter, the veteran dramatic critic. Young Mr. Winter is an actor.

#### HOW "THE CLIMBERS" WAS FOUND.

The public at large may not know that managers and stars set about procuring a play in the same way that other people buy or rent a house—by going to an agent and finding out what he has on his lists. Amelia Bingham recently related for *MUNSEY'S* the story of her discovery of "The Climbers."

"When I had secured my theater," began Miss Bingham, "I sought out Miss Marbury, the biggest agent in the field, and told her what I wanted. 'I think I have the very thing for you,' she replied. 'Mr. Fitch has just returned from Europe with the scenario of a new piece.' An appointment was made for a reading, but when it was over I wasn't satisfied.

"'I admit the strength of the thing, Mr. Fitch,' I said, 'but I don't care to play a bad woman. I want a heroine who will enlist the sympathies of everybody by her goodness, not simply because of her misfortunes.'

"'Well,' he rejoined, 'I have another play, but the only part you would care to take isn't even as important as I had planned to make it. In fact, it isn't a star piece at all.'

"'Never mind about that,' I told him. 'If the story is all right, I don't care about the star part of it. I'll get the company to fit.'

"Another appointment was made, and Mr. Fitch brought 'The Climbers' to

read. When he had finished the first act, 'That's all right,' I said. 'Go on.' At the end of the second, 'I'll take the play,' I told him, and listening to the next two acts was a mere matter of form. I knew already that it was the piece I wanted.

"And now I ought to tell you that that play was declined by Mr. Charles Frohman," said Mr. Fitch, when he had completed the reading.

"That makes no difference to me," was my reply. 'It is the play I want.'

"But the first night was a nervous time. The piece is full of tricks, things to be managed off stage which would bring disaster if there was the slightest hitch. For example, if the lights didn't go up at just the right instant after the dark scene, the whole episode would be ruined. All these things were on my mind, and I think there was nothing I thought so little of as my own acting."

#### THE SPECIAL PERFORMANCE.

As a rule, managers do not care to have metropolitan critics journey to near by cities to notice a performance which is being "tried on the dog" before being submitted to the approval of the capital; but now and again this advance view is courted, and in some cases a function is made of the affair. Engraved invitations are sent out to the newspaper men in the name of the manager, and a special train of parlor cars carries the guests to the scene of the trial. This was done in the case of "The Last Appeal," which is the first serious work undertaken by its author, Leo Ditrichstein, unless he chooses to regard "The Song of the Sword," done the season before last by Sothorn, in that light. His adaptation of "Are You a Mason?" is a farce hit, and he himself finds in it one of his most congenial rôles. In "The Last Appeal" he has gone to Austria, his own country, for his background, and has founded his story on the tragic romance of the late Crown Prince Rudolph, who is supposed to have committed suicide for love of a woman who was beneath him in rank, and whom it was therefore impossible for him to marry. A similar theme is treated in the serial, "A Stroke of Kingcraft," which was begun in the October issue of THE JUNIOR MUNSEY.

Ditrichstein comes of a noble Hungarian family, but Leo's father sacrificed his title when he espoused the cause of Kossuth. Young Ditrichstein went on the stage, and it was while he was leading man at the Stadt Theater, in Ham-

burg, that Gustav Amberg engaged him for his German company in New York. That was nine years ago, and since then he has learned not only to act but to write in English. His *Zou Zou* in "Trilby" made him known all over the country. He has become a naturalized citizen, and promises to be one of our popular playwrights.

Robert Drou  t is the leading man in "The Last Appeal," and the leading woman is Kate Hasset, who came to the management and asked to be tried in the part. She was absolutely unknown, but after she had acted a scene she was engaged forthwith.

#### FAVERSHAM AND "A ROYAL RIVAL"

Faversham seems to be the best liked of the numerous *Don C  sars* with which the new season has been so thickly sprinkled. He impersonates the reckless young nobleman with a sort of reserve power that is in decided contrast to the whirlwind rush with which Lewis Waller charges at the part. Faversham, too, seems a bit nervous over his ante mortem song with the soldiers, but he gets through it very commendably, considering that he has never had any comic opera training. One can easily guess that this song was a matter of considerable discussion between the star and his manager, for in the course of an unusually bright curtain speech on the opening night, Mr. Faversham remarked: "I shall do my utmost by hard work to stay on Broadway; that is, unless Mr. Frohman should decide to put me into opera."

Faversham has need to be at his best in "A Royal Rival." With two exceptions, he is supported by the most badly chosen cast in the history of the syndicate, not even barring the collection of misfits that surrounded Ada Rehan last winter. The two exceptions are Edwin Stevens, as the arch villain, *Don Jose*, and versatile Jessie Busley, as the boy *Pedro*. Last spring Mr. Stevens was *Baron Stein* in the Empire "Diplomacy," and he will be recalled as the swindler with the stiff fingers in "Brother Officers." Miss Busley, although still young, has behind her a long record of hits in striking character parts, such as the rough speaking but good hearted music hall girl in "Hearts Are Trumps," the slavey of "The Brixton Burglary," and one of "The Two Little Vagrants."

Julie Opp was cast for the gipsy girl, *Marita*, who sings ballads and dances in

the streets. Why Charles Frohman should have taken the trouble to bring her across the Atlantic for this rôle is beyond comprehension. Miss Opp is American born, of German parentage, tall, statuesque, and made an impression here some years ago in the leading part of Pinero's "Princess and the Butterfly" at the Lyceum. Women, especially, went wild about her beauty. They sought admission to her dressing room and raved to her face about her exquisite neck and shoulders. She went back to London and rejoined George Alexander's company at the St. James, where she continued to play women of the smart set in his drawingroom dramas. In "The Wilderness," last winter, she was *Edith Thorold*. The principal part, *Mabel Vaughan*, fell to Eva Moore, wife of H. V. Esmond, the play's author, who stipulated that she should have it when he made his contract. But to return to Miss Opp in "A Royal Rival," it was suggested that she would better engage the kinetoscope effect used by a colored duo to give life to her dance in the first act. Throughout the play one feels that she is conscious of being sadly out of place. She tries to reduce her unusual height by going about the stage in a stooping posture, and she shows no more of the gipsy's fire than a Swedish match separated from its scratcher.

But if Mr. Frohman was wandering in his mind when he cast Julie Opp for *Marita*, he must have been the victim of a fearsome hallucination when he picked out Joe Holland for the King of Spain. To be sure, the part represents a cowardly scoundrel, but in England William Mollison managed to make him seem like a man, if rascally. It is in very truth a big jump from the harassed husband of the farcical "Brixton Burglary" to the contemptible king of the melodramatic "Royal Rival," but the marvel is that so clever an actor as Mr. Holland should play any part so badly. It looks very much as if Mr. Frohman had entered upon the new season with the determination to educate his players in versatility, willy nilly.

Going further down in the scale, the officer with whom *Don Caesar* fights has no more animation than a toy woolly dog. In brief, after one recalls the fine support Mr. Frohman gave to Annie Russell, John Drew, and Ethel Barrymore, the Faversham entourage reminds one of the old star and sticks combinations of the early sixties. Still, somebody must be made to pay the piper for the money

lost on "The Girl From Up There," and "Favvy's," happening to be the first production launched after Edna May's sixteen weeks of London frost, may have been pitched on as the scapegoat.

#### IMPRESSIONS FROM FALL OPENINGS.

There seems to be a disposition on the part of certain actor folk to please themselves in the selection of plays this season, together with a trusting faith that the public will approve their choice. Because there is abundant opportunity for fencing, an art in which he is skilful, Hackett elects to appear in a comedy rôle for which he has no natural aptitude. Sothorn, who delights in melancholy, poses as the unhappy *Lovelace*, and simply revels in the death scene. Bertha Galland, with a personal hankering for the weirdly romantic, chooses "The Forest Lovers." Louis Mann and Clara Lipman, having won success in musical farce, long for legitimate laurels and are presenting a drama of serious import about the Boers. Even Weber & Fields are sacrificing the fun that made their playhouse so successful for spectacular effect.

Certainly John Drew has had many parts more to his liking than the unhappy major of "The Second in Command"; but he recognized the entertaining character of the piece itself, and has reaped his reward in the hit he has made with it. Again, take "The Rogers Brothers in Washington" the biggest money earner of the autumn; note how carefully its makers have modeled the slow on the previous pieces in the series, even to carrying forward the characters in the "Reuben" song. David Warfield, who became a star in "The Auctioneer," does not seek for novelty, but makes up exactly as he appeared in his Weberfields part last year; and although the critics chafed, the people packed the theater. The foregoing, with the two musical comedies, "The Messenger Boy" at Daly's and "The Liberty Belles" at the Madison Square, may be set down as the only substantial metropolitan box office winners among the 1901 fall openings.

There is little reason why the veteran J. H. Stoddart should not realize his ambition to make his *Lachlan Campbell* in "The Bonnie Brier Bush" the great work of his life. His portrayal of the character is masterly. Nothing finer has been seen on the stage in years than the figure of the dour old Scot.